

COUNCIL

17 JULY 2013

Present :- Councillor Colin Sykes (Mayor)
Councillor John Elliott (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors Christopher Arnold, Nick Barlow,
Kevin Bentley, Elizabeth Blundell, Tina Bourne,
Mark Cable, Peter Chillingworth, Helen Chuah,
Barrie Cook, Mark Cory, Beverly Davies, Andrew Ellis,
Annie Feltham, Stephen Ford, Bill Frame, Ray Gamble,
Martin Goss, Scott Greenhill, Marcus Harrington, Julia
Havis, Jo Hayes, Peter Higgins, Theresa Higgins,
Mike Hogg, Martin Hunt (Deputy Leader) , Brian Jarvis,
John Jowers, Margaret Kimberley, Sonia Lewis,
Cyril Liddy, Michael Lilley, Sue Lissimore,
Jackie Maclean, Jon Manning, Richard Martin,
Kim Naish, Philip Oxford, Will Quince, Lesley Scott-
Boutell, Peter Sheane, Paul Smith, Laura Sykes,
Dennis Willetts, Julie Young and Tim Young

The meeting was opened with prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, Pastor Eric Blowes.

12. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Barton, Blandon, Cope, Chapman, Fairley-Crowe, Harris, Hazell, Mudie, B. Oxford, G. Oxford, Sutton and Turrell.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

14. Have Your Say!

Angel Kalyan addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 7(5). She reminded Councillors of their duty in respect of Council governance. She explained that she had written to all Councillors in 2011 with evidence of malpractice and had requested that Councillors investigate and make public their findings. She asked Councillors whether and how they would investigate the allegations made.

Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, was invited to respond. He indicated that the Council had looked at the allegations made and entered into significant correspondence with Mrs Kalyan. No evidence had been found to support the allegations made and the Leader of the Council was satisfied that that was the case. Mrs Kalyan had been advised to seek legal advice if she wished to pursue the matter further. If there was any

substance in the allegations she made, a lawyer would be able to advise her how to take the matter forward.

Christopher Manby, Essex Grassroots Co-ordinator of the Taxpayers Alliance, addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 7(5). He noted the proposal in the minutes of the Parking Partnership meeting of 20 June to install parking meters on North Station Road. There was widespread opposition to this amongst business on North Station Road who feared this would deter their customers. It would harm rather help businesses. He had raised a petition containing approximately 100 signatures, including 9 businesses, opposing the proposal which he handed into the Parking Officer. He asked the Portfolio Holder for Street Services why, in the current tough economic times, with businesses facing rising costs, he was considering a proposal that would only increase their costs further?

Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, replied that he would be content to receive the petition and take it into account. Whilst a suggestion had been included in a report to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) about the possible introduction of parking meters, it had been made clear that it was not for the NEPP to make such a proposal for Colchester. The decision on this lay with Colchester Borough Council, not the NEPP. The press article was based on the report and not on a first hand account of the meeting. He would seek the views of Cabinet colleagues on the principle of the introduction of parking meters and only if they were in agreement would any such proposal even be considered. If such a scheme was to be brought forward he would then seek the views of ward councillors, residents and businesses. Also any scheme that was introduced would have an element of free parking but he reiterated that there was no intention to impose such a scheme anywhere within the Borough.

15. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:-

- He was arranging visits to the Town Hall for the classes of each of the mascots for the Tour Series;
- An Open Day would be held at Colchester Zoo on 27 July 2013, which would be an opportunity to meet representatives of the Mayor's Charities;
- Invitations for the Opening of the Oyster Fisheries would be issued shortly. In line with the theme of "Colchester ... United" the Mayor explained that the ceremony would be held on-shore at Cudmore Grove to ensure that nobody was excluded from the event;
- The Mayor announced that Colchester Borough Council had won a Gold Award in Essex County Council's sustainable business travel plan accreditation scheme and presented the award to Councillor Nick Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

16. Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS)

Councillors Bentley and Jowers (in respect of being members of Essex County Council Cabinet) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in minute 21 of the Cabinet meeting of 10 July 2013 be approved and adopted (MAJORITY voted FOR).

17. Redisplay Works at Colchester Castle

Council received a presentation from Tom Hodgson, Colchester Development Manager, and Bill Seaman, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Manager, on Colchester's heritage and the exhibition and display works for Colchester Castle.

Council thanked Tom Hodgson and Bill Seaman for the presentation and then debated the presentation. In the course of the debate the following points and issues were raised:-

- The content of the new displays and if they would present a balanced chronological history of Colchester;
- The use of mortar and lime in the restoration of the Roman walls;
- The importance of partnership working and the role of EU in securing funding for the restoration and display works;
- Access to the Castle for those with disabilities and the installation of a glass lift within the Castle;
- Whether progress had been made on proposals for the lighting of the Roman walls;
- Whether there were any plans for the Temple of Mithras;
- Projected visitor numbers and how the exhibition and display works could be promoted to Colchester residents and further afield;
- The use of artefacts not used in the displays;
- How the new displays at the Castle could be tied into other cultural and historic attractions in Colchester.

18. Blacklisting of Union Members

Councillors Hogg and Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

It was PROPOSED by Councillor T. Young that:-

This Council:

- Notes and welcomes campaigning by trade unions to end the scandalous practice of 'blacklisting';

- Shares the serious concerns of Unite the Union, with regard to allegations of 'blacklisting' by joint venture BAM, Ferrovial and Kier (BFK) at Crossrail;
- Notes that meaningful evidence exists to support the view that Unite Shop Steward, Frank Morris, was victimised and sacked by BAM, Ferrovial and Kier (BFK) for being a trade unionist and raising legitimate safety concerns;
- Calls on BAM, Ferrovial and Kier (BFK) to take responsibility for this unethical conduct and reinstate Unite Shop Steward, Frank Morris.

On being put to the vote, the MOTION was LOST (MAJORITY voted AGAINST).

19. Questions to Cabinet Members and Chairmen pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10

Questioner	Subject	Response
Verbal Questions		
Councillor Quince	Had the Portfolio Holder looked at allowing a charity to occupy the Keddies building in order to make a saving on business rates and how long would the Council pay business rates on the building before deciding to knock it down?	Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that Slack Space were occupying the building for that reason. The situation on business rates was complex and the Council would lose income from business rates should the building be knocked down.
Councillor Quince	Why did the Council chose to fund the Tour Series when the funding could have been used to help keep Abbots Activity Centre open? When would there be an opportunity to scrutinise the decision, rather than the process by which the decision was reached?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, responded that the Tour Series had widespread appeal and helped bring in visitors to Colchester. Abbots required a considerable subsidy to keep it open. The decision was due to be pre-scrutinised at the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 23 July 2013.
Councillor	Was the fact that neither	Councillor Feltham,

Jarvis	the Portfolio Holder nor an officer attended the recent Older Persons Forum, where Abbots was on the agenda, indicative of the low priority the administration placed on the vulnerable and their organisations? Should Abbots Activity Centre be closed, what was the most likely future use of the building?	Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, explained that it was unfortunate that she could not attend, but the fact that the administration had set up the Forum indicated that it took it seriously. The use of the building would be decided once a final decision had been taken on the service.
Councillor Arnold	Could the Portfolio Holder explain what the next steps in the regeneration of the south east parts of the town centre would be?	Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, explained that the Creative Business Centre was being set up. He was looking at a number of other ideas with officers, but much of the detail was commercially sensitive. He would be happy to arrange a briefing for Councillor Arnold with the relevant officers.
Councillor Arnold	Was the Portfolio Holder satisfied with the quality of the recycling sacks which seemed smaller and less robust than previously and did he agree that if this was the case, it was a false economy?	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, indicated that he did not believe there had been a change to specifications of the sacks but would check.
Councillor Cable	Could the Portfolio Holder assure the residents of Dedham and the members of Dedham Parish Council that their views would be heard and that sufficient time would be given for the implementation of the new parking scheme?	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, explained that the Parish Council and ward councillors had been kept informed throughout the process. The plans were not finalised and were subject to changes to make them more

		acceptable. He would look into the scheme suggested by the traders.
Councillor Harrington	Could the Portfolio Holder convince Council that she had taken the human cost into account in reaching her decision to close Abbots Activity Centre? Would better marketing improve attendance at Abbots?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, responded that the Council had taken due care with its legal responsibilities, but had gone further than this and had signposted users to other providers. However, the services Abbots provided were not a statutory function. She believed that Abbots had been marketed positively.
Councillor J. Young	What progress had been made in making the bus station a better facility?	Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, indicated that he would send a written response.
Councillor Bentley	When would food waste collections be rolled out to the whole borough and would be detailed information be provided to all members	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, set out the timescales for the delivery of food waste containers for each collection route and confirmed that collections would begin a week later. However, there were issues with extending the collections to older flats. Ward Councillors would be kept fully informed.
Councillor Naish	Could the Portfolio Holder confirm what ages were covered by the definition of an "older person"?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, confirmed the definition covered the ages 50+.
Councillor Cook	Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update on	Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for

	<p>negotiations with Essex County Council on the future arrangements for access to the High Street and would there be a successful outcome?</p>	<p>Regeneration, confirmed he had met with the Essex County Council Portfolio Holder. It was hoped an announcement on future plans that everyone would be able to support would be made in August.</p>
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20. Schedules of Decisions taken by Portfolio Holders

RESOLVED that the Schedules of Portfolio Holder decisions for the period 9 March 2013 - 3 July 2013 be noted.